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Standing Committee

DRAFT REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS ON ITS IN-SESSIONAL MEETING HELD DURING THE THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

Rapporteur: Mr. Robert K. GATHUNGU (Kenya)

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I. OPENING OF THE MEETING, ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The Standing Committee for Programme Matters held an in-sessional meeting during the thirty-eighth session of the Governing Council, convened in New York from 3 to 21 June 1991. The fourth Vice-President of the Governing Council, Mr. Robert K. Gathungu of Kenya, served as Chairman of the Committee.

2. At its 1st meeting, on 5 June 1991, the Standing Committee provisionally adopted its agenda and tentative schedule of work contained in annexes I and II of document DP/1991/SCPM/L.1, pending a decision by the Governing Council on the allocation of items 4 (c) and 5 (b) of the agenda of the Council (DP/1991/L.7). The Standing Committee also agreed to maintain a flexible schedule of work and decided that the Chairman of the Committee should act as Rapporteur.

3. Following agreement by the Governing Council on the allocation of agenda items 4 (c) and 5 (b) of its own agenda, the Standing Committee adopted its provisional agenda and organization of work on __ June 1991.

II. UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

4. For its consideration of this item, the Standing Committee had before it documents DP/1991/29 and Add.1, and DP/FPA/CP/74-88.

Summary of the discussion in the Committee

5. The Standing Committee considered the following 15 proposed United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) country programmes: Africa: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Congo, Mauritania and Niger; Arab States and Europe: Albania, Morocco and Tunisia; Asia and the Pacific: Bangladesh, India and Malaysia; and Latin America and the Caribbean: Bolivia, Dominican Republic, English-speaking Caribbean subregion and Honduras. It also considered the proposed UNFPA intercountry programme for 1992-1995. The summary of the discussion concerning these 15 country programmes and the intercountry programmes and the recommendations of the Standing Committee on each is reproduced below.

A. Sub-Saharan Africa

Summary of the discussion in the Committee

6. Representatives opened the discussion by making general comments on UNFPA activities in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. Many stressed the importance of strengthening coordination among the numerous donors working in the region, especially in those countries in which Governments directed different donors to work in different subregions. Others expressed concern that despite

concerted efforts in the area of family planning in recent years, the contraceptive prevalence rate in the region had not increased significantly, nor had fertility or mortality significantly declined.

7. Several representatives noted the relatively high proportion of multi-bilateral funds envisaged for several country programmes and inquired whether, and to what extent, reliance on such funding could affect programme delivery. One representative, noting the importance of balancing population, resources and the environment in the region, asked if UNFPA planned to formulate and implement a special environmental strategy for sub-Saharan Africa.

8. Concerning the proposed UNFPA regional programme for sub-Saharan Africa, 1992-1995, several representatives sought further clarification on the Africa Survey Programme planned by the Fund. What were its objectives, and how would it be implemented? Would it be coordinated with similar efforts in the region? Representatives also requested more information about the proposed transfer to developing countries of the global programmes of training in population and development based in Europe, as well as about efforts to strengthen and reorient the curricula of the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) in Ghana and the Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques (IFORD) in Cameroon.

9. Several representatives commended UNFPA for the comprehensiveness of the programme for Burkina Faso. One asked why there was no mention in the programme of assistance to clinic-level training in counselling and in information, education and communication activities aimed at improving the quality of family planning services.

10. Several representatives noted that their Governments attached great importance to the proposed UNFPA assistance to Cape Verde. One emphasized the importance of building up the country's capacity to implement its own population activities. Another asked whether the national women's and youth organizations would be the main executing agencies for information, education and communication and women's activities, or whether other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) would be used to execute projects in these fields.

11. With regard to the proposed UNFPA country programme in the Congo, one representative asked what the Government's contribution would be. He emphasized the need to integrate maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP) activities into existing health care facilities and recommended shifting resources from data collection to other sectors.

12. Many representatives commended UNFPA on its proposed programme for Niger. One asked, however, why UNFPA had not conducted a programme review and strategy development mission in the Niger. Another recommended that the Fund should coordinate the implementation of its programme with the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE)/Niger and that increased attention be given to providing high quality family planning services in the public sector. Another representative stressed the importance of strengthening MCH/FP

activities and enhancing the role and status of women. She also asked whether UNFPA planned to coordinate its activities with those of the World Bank, which was currently elaborating a population programme quite similar to that of UNFPA.

Response of the Administration

13. The Standing Committee was informed that UNFPA was equally of the view that effective coordination was indispensable to successful programming. That was why UNFPA country programmes emphasized the need for regular meetings with Government agencies as well as with other donors active in the country. However, population programmes needed time to work, especially in such areas as increasing contraceptive prevalence and reducing fertility and mortality.

14. In response to the concerns about the proportion of multi-bilateral funding in the proposed UNFPA country programmes, the Standing Committee was informed that the proposed levels of multi-bilateral cooperation took into account the considerable interest of donors in the Africa region. The Fund also agreed that UNFPA country programmes should place more emphasis on the interrelationship of population and the environment, and it was envisaged that UNFPA would have formulated an appropriate strategy before the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

15. Regarding the queries on the Africa Survey Programme, the Director explained that the proposal was based on extensive consultations with experts working on the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), as well as with those at United Nations and World Bank headquarters. He stressed that the survey would concentrate on collecting data and conducting research on those countries that were not covered by the DHS. UNFPA would convene an expert meeting with DHS, The Population Council, and bilateral donors in late 1991.

16. With regard to the questions on RIPS and IFORD, the Director of the Africa Division informed the Standing Committee that the proposal to reorient the curricula of those two institutions to focus on population and development was based on the findings and recommendations of an evaluation mission that visited RIPS and IFORD in 1989. He noted that the governing bodies of both RIPS and IFORD would meet in the fall of 1991 to discuss the recommendations of the evaluation.

17. In response to questions relating to transferring the global programmes of training in population and development to developing countries, the Standing Committee was informed that the transfer was intended to take place in the third year of the proposed programme. This proposal had the full support of the respective European Governments.

18. In response to the query on clinical training in information, education and communication in the Burkina Faso programme, the Standing Committee was informed that such training would be very much a part of the implementation of the programme. With regard to the question on executing agencies for information, education and communication and women's activities in Cape Verde,

the Committee was informed that experience had shown that mass organizations such as women's and youth organizations had the extensive networks needed to reach people at the grass-roots level. This did not, however, preclude using other organizations, including local NGOs.

19. Concerning Governments' contributions to country programmes, the Standing Committee was informed that this should be viewed in terms of the human and institutional resources and physical facilities that Governments put at the disposal of the programme, which was quite substantial. The Committee was further informed that the programme for the Congo did in fact intend to further integrate MCH/FP services into existing health care facilities.

20. In reference to a question raised regarding a programme review and strategy development exercise for the Niger, the Standing Committee was informed that because the country programme for the Niger was based on an exhaustive, year-long sectoral review in 1989, such an exercise was unnecessary. With regard to the World Bank's programme in the Niger, the Committee was informed that UNFPA was in constant contact with the Bank at all levels and that there was no risk of duplication of effort in the two programmes.

B. Arab States and Europe

Summary of the discussion in Committee

21. Representatives spoke favourably of the programmes under consideration and several commended the excellent documentation prepared.

22. One delegation, in a statement supporting the regional programme, commended the emphasis UNFPA placed on the regional dimension and expressed its satisfaction with the amount of work being done in the areas of data collection and analysis, women, population and development, population research and training, and policy development. The delegation also noted with satisfaction the attempt to create linkages between the regional and interregional programmes, in particular with regard to the Cairo Demographic Centre. The need for increased support for population programmes, especially in the Maghreb region, as well as the importance of drawing on local competence, were also stressed.

23. Endorsing the country programme for Tunisia, one of the delegates congratulated UNFPA on the design of the programme and Tunisia's innovative population policy, especially regarding the role and status of women, and recommended that Tunisia be considered as a training ground for other countries.

24. One delegation observed that the country programme for Morocco had built effectively on the previous one and complemented activities carried out by other donors and was pleased to note the emphasis placed on maternal and child health and family planning, especially in the rural areas, as well as on data collection.

25. Several delegations expressed an interest in collaborating with UNFPA through their bilateral programmes in the region.

Response of the Administration

26. The Standing Committee was informed that UNFPA was indeed focusing on this region, which was reflected in the fact that Morocco was a priority country for UNFPA assistance. With regard to support for population programmes in the Maghreb region, the Committee was assured that UNFPA looked forward to continuing its cooperation with bilateral donors in the Arab States and Europe region.

C. Asia and the Pacific

Summary of the discussion in the Committee

27. Many delegations expressed their support for the programmes proposed by UNFPA.

28. On the proposed regional programme for 1992-1995, one representative felt that greater emphasis should be placed on such areas as the quality of care indicators, mobilization of community resources, and the unmet needs of young couples and adolescents rather than on logistics training, programme management, management information services and local production, all of which were being undertaken at the country level. Another delegate noted that the contraceptive mix in the region was changing and suggested that UNFPA look into areas of programme financing.

29. With regard to Bangladesh, delegations noted that the programme complemented and supplemented the Government's population efforts. One representative commented that improving the quality of service delivery should be given priority over reaching quantitative targets and enhancing the safety of contraceptives.

30. Many representatives acknowledged and welcomed UNFPA efforts to strengthen the coordination of population activities in Bangladesh and to mainstream women into development activities. A number of them called for better coordination, particularly in the area of MCH/FP and programmes pertaining to women, population and development. Another delegate, noting the fine line between population and non-population activities as they relate to women's issues, recommended that, given the limited resource situation, UNFPA concentrate on activities dealing directly with population issues.

31. One representative requested that any activities in MCH/FP, information, education and communication and information management fully take into consideration the International Development Association (IDA) Development Credit Agreement (drawn up by the Government of Bangladesh, IDA and a consortium of donors).

32. On the issue of local contraceptive production, one of the delegations queried the UNFPA rationale for undertaking another feasibility study for a condom plant, since such a study had been conducted previously under a bilateral arrangement and the outcome was negative.

33. Among the specific recommendations made by delegations were: (a) further emphasis on the quality of service delivery; (b) increased male involvement and responsibility in family planning; (c) coordination of the contraceptive feasibility study as well as of contraceptive supplies and logistics; (d) further integration of MCH and FP services; and (e) increased coordination with the World Bank and other donors.

34. On the India programme, one delegation commended UNFPA on the role it had played in helping India to meet its contraceptive needs by importing supplies, facilitating the local manufacture of condoms and intra-uterine devices (IUDs) and in providing raw materials for oral pill production. He also expressed his Government's support for working with NGOs and promoting social marketing. Another delegate commented that there was a need for more information, education and communication on family planning awareness, since recent data from a survey indicated that knowledge on spacing methods was limited in some parts of the country.

35. One representative expressed support for UNFPA efforts in Bangladesh and India in the field of the local production of contraceptives. However, he questioned the proposed UNFPA-assisted women-in-development activities in those countries, since they aimed at heightening female literacy or promoting income-generating opportunities without any specific references to population-related activities.

36. On the Malaysia programme, one representative expressed satisfaction that the programme was being executed by national departments or institutions. However, clarification was requested on how the proposed programme would support the Government's activities in dealing with major concerns vis-à-vis differentials between regions and subgroups and internal and international migration.

Response of the Administration

37. In addressing the questions raised, the Standing Committee was reminded that UNFPA had adopted the programme approach. The programmes represented only a framework; the specific details of each programme would be worked out during the formulation of programme components.

38. With regard to the contraceptive feasibility study in Bangladesh, the Standing Committee was informed that the previous study was mainly on condom manufacturing. The Committee was also informed that the new proposal, in addition to incorporating the economic feasibility of local production, included a study of both IUDs and injectables, and further clarified that the Government had expressed its determination to explore ways to produce contraceptives locally in both the public and private sectors.

39. With regard to the query on women in development, the Standing Committee was informed that, in addition to family planning, other activities such as safe motherhood initiatives, reproductive health care and improvement in the status of women were envisaged. Income-generating activities were linked to MCH/FP-related information, education and communication issues as well as with population and development.

40. On the issue of coordination, the Standing Committee was informed that UNFPA continued to place increasing emphasis on coordination; the Fund planned to execute or support, through the United Nations specialized agencies: (a) a multisectoral population programme dealing with women's issues (with financing from the World Bank and other co-financers); (b) the family planning contraceptive surveillance team, with multi-bilateral financing through the World Bank; and (c) joint ventures with UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other specialized agencies.

D. Latin America and the Caribbean

Summary of the discussion in the Committee

41. Several delegations commended the quality of the country programmes proposed by UNFPA. Several representatives noted with concern the high percentage of projected multi-bilateral resources included in the projected financing of the proposed programmes.

42. The proposed regional programme was welcomed by numerous delegations. One delegation emphasized the need to devise strategies to extend the coverage of quality services for maternal and child health and family planning, to promote programmatic and operational decentralization in support of such extension of services, and to make information, education and communication activities relevant to service delivery as well as to awareness-creation and motivation for family planning.

43. Many delegations expressed concern over the reduction in resources to the region, in light of the magnitude of the population needs that had to be addressed. A number of delegations praised the work of the Latin America Demographic Centre (CELADE) in the region and expressed concern for the anticipated reduction of UNFPA financial assistance to the Centre. One delegation suggested that UNFPA conduct an evaluation of the experience in integrating sociodemographic variables in structural adjustment and poverty alleviation initiatives in the region.

44. The need to give high priority to the population efforts of Bolivia was underscored. It was suggested by one delegation that high priority should be given to the proposed MCH/FP activities and to the training of personnel in the Ministry of Health and NGOs. Another delegation recommended that information, education and communication efforts should be designed to reflect the different ethnic groups in the country, and a donor group should be established to facilitate coordination in population activities.

45. In discussing the proposed Honduras country programme, a number of delegations expressed the need for improved donor coordination in order to avoid duplication and suggested that a short-term consultant be sent to Honduras at the beginning of the programme to offer further support in the coordination efforts of the Ministry of Planning. One representative underlined the importance of the participation of NGOs in the implementation of the programme. Another delegate recommended that special emphasis be given to expanding the contraceptive method mix to ensure the accessibility of services to rural women. Another representative noted the inter-institutional nature of the programme, indicating that it constituted the most appropriate manner of dealing with population questions and suggested that the programme could serve as a good example for other countries.

46. The measures in the proposed programme for the Dominican Republic designed to provide information and services to hard-to-reach, but important, population groups were welcomed. It was also observed that the emphasis on strengthening institutions in the public-sector and public service delivery complemented efforts by other donors to improve the availability of family planning methods through private sources.

47. Numerous delegations expressed support for the subregional approach proposed for the English-speaking Caribbean. One delegation recommended that research on the cost-effectiveness of integrating acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) education into family planning programmes be conducted and that support for integrated strategies to prevent adolescent pregnancies and to retain young girls in school be continued. A number of delegations referred to significant rates of out-migration of skilled labour experienced by the countries of the subregion, and recommended that further studies on migration be conducted in order to obtain guidance on strategies to address the problem. Another delegation inquired about the linkages between the programme for the subregion and initiatives of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Response of the Administration

48. The Standing Committee was informed that UNFPA had noted the concern expressed for the reduction of funds in the regional programme, and explained that the higher level of past activities was mainly due to the inclusion of special subregional projects for Central America and the English-speaking Caribbean. Regarding the funding of CELADE, the Committee was informed that CELADE would continue to be the main partner of UNFPA in the region. The Committee was further informed of the execution by CARICOM of a number of UNFPA-supported activities in the Caribbean region.

49. With regard to the high percentage of multi-bilateral funds in the proposed programmes, UNFPA expressed optimism that those funds would be forthcoming since the Latin America and the Caribbean Division had been actively involved in multi-bilateral fund-raising activities, with positive responses from several donor countries. Moreover, the UNFPA contribution to each of the programmes reflected the minimum level of UNFPA financial

assistance. The Fund would absorb part of the proposed multi-bilateral resources if higher levels of UNFPA income were achieved.

50. On the issue of donor coordination, the Committee was informed that such initiatives had already been undertaken in Bolivia and Honduras and that further efforts in that regard would be pursued. UNFPA collaboration with NGOs in the region and the Fund's intention to extend that collaboration to the Honduras programme was cited as an indication of the Fund's commitment and disposition to work closely with NGOs.

51. With reference to the integration of sociodemographic information in structural adjustment, the Fund mentioned that in Honduras there was a good example of a project in that area and that an evaluation of the experience gained was planned for the second half of 1991.

E. Interregional programme

52. For its consideration of the interregional programme, the Standing Committee had before it documents DP/1991/29 and Add.1.

Summary of the discussion in Committee

53. Delegations expressed strong support for the proposed UNFPA intercountry programme, which consisted of regional and interregional activities for the period 1992-1995. Many delegations noted that the programme was well conceptualized and well designed and that the documentation (DP/1991/29 and Add.1) provided useful and comprehensive information on the achievements and constraints of the current programme as well as the plans for the new phase.

54. One representative sought additional clarification of the overexpenditure and suggested that, in future, approval of the Governing Council be sought for such overexpenditure. He also asked whether the proposed interregional programme included support for the 1994 Population Conference.

55. One representative, noting that the proposed programme did not include multi-bilateral funding, asked whether that reflected a UNFPA policy not to do so. Another delegate sought clarification on the interrelationship between the Fund's proposed successor arrangements and its intercountry programme for 1992-1995. She also asked how the programme would be affected if the proposed successor arrangements were not approved by the Governing Council. One delegate recommended making increased use of NGOs from developing countries, especially for activities in special areas such as AIDS prevention. Another asked what UNFPA was doing to ensure that its publications reached their intended audiences.

Response of the Administrator

56. The Standing Committee was informed that a review of the programme as well as the in-depth evaluation of some major activities, such as the WHO/HRP

and the Global Programme of Training in Population and Development, had documented the effectiveness of UNFPA support and UNFPA would in future seek the approval of the Governing Council for programme overexpenditure.

57. With regard to the question on support for the 1994 Population Conference, the Standing Committee was informed that no budgetary allocations were foreseen as part of the interregional programme. However, support would be provided as part of the regional activities to organize regional meetings to review pertinent population issues and programmes of each region and to provide substantive inputs to the Conference.

58. Concerning the question on the use of multi-bilateral assistance for the interregional programme, the Standing Committee was informed that UNFPA was already receiving multi-bilateral funding for part of its global programme of training in population and development, as well as for specific population and environment activities and selected women, population and development activities. The Fund was also making special efforts to enhance the participation of NGOs, including universities, particularly those from developing countries.

59. In response to the inquiries on how the financial arrangements for the proposed interregional programme would be affected by the outcome of the discussions on the proposed successor arrangements, the Standing Committee was informed that all four regional programmes, as well as the interregional programme, had been designed with the expectation that the Governing Council would approve the proposed arrangement. However, if the proposed arrangement were not approved, advisory courses and support costs could be financed with the funds set aside for that purpose.

60. Concerning the question on the dissemination of project results and other information materials, the Standing Committee was informed that it had long been a priority concern of UNFPA. The Fund therefore continually strove to update its distribution system and to verify the comparability of the existing distribution lists of a number of agencies and institutions. The Committee was also assured that future country programmes would include information on relevant regional and interregional activities.

61. The recommendations of the Standing Committee for Programme Matters are contained in paragraph 127 of the present report.

III. UNDP PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

A. Implementation of selected country programmes

62. For the consideration of item 4 (a) of its agenda, the Standing Committee had before it the report by the Administrator on the implementation of selected country programmes (DP/1991/21).

Summary of the discussion

63. In introducing document DP/1991/21, the Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation (BPPE) highlighted three particular features of UNDP programme activities emerging from the regional presentations:

(a) Diversity. There was a wide range of concerns, ranging from responding to the adverse social effects of structural adjustment programmes in Africa, to developing new programmes in response to the merger between Yemen and Democratic Yemen, and the restructuring of the economies in Eastern Europe. In Asia, there was a contrast of challenges posed by the world's most populous nations and those of the small island States of the Pacific; in Latin America and the Caribbean, UNDP had responded to the sensitive but promising calls for cooperation in strengthening human rights;

(b) Commonality. There was commonality in concerns of an interregional and global nature, such as poverty alleviation, women in development and environmental conservation;

(c) New concerns. These had arisen over time and had been added to the already wide mandate of UNDP, for instance, issues relating to refugees/displaced persons and HIV/AIDS.

64. Delegations welcomed the report and commended the many initiatives under way which enhanced the programming and review process, for instance national technical cooperation assessments and programmes (NaTCAPs) and mid-term reviews. In addition, support was given to cooperation provided in the areas of human rights; resource mobilization; national execution; regional programming, with particular reference to the World Maritime University and the Asian Transport and Communications Decade; African initiatives such as the African Capacity-building Initiative, the Social Dimensions of Adjustment and Structural Adjustment Advisory Teams for Africa; human development; management development; environment; HIV/AIDS; women in development; and the response to the Gulf crisis.

Response of the Administration

65. The Assistant Administrator thanked the delegates for the wide measure of support given to the report and to the many activities under way.

66. The recommendation of the Standing Committee for Programme Matters is contained in paragraph 127 of the present report.

B. Evaluation

67. For the discussion of item 4 (b) of its agenda, the Standing Committee had before it the report of he Administrator on evaluation (DP/1991/22).

Summary of the discussion in the Committee

68. All the delegations present expressed appreciation for and interest in the report on evaluation (DP/1991/22). It was noted that the Central Evaluation Office (CEO) had reflected the new themes adopted by UNDP in its work programme; that was welcomed, as were the contents of the work programme. A preference was expressed for CEO to present at least a two-year work programme in the future.

69. Several delegations noted that the evaluations presented by CEO to the Governing Council raised significant and timely issues. These included the important choices which UNDP faced in integrating emerging development concerns into its regular operations. Delegations stressed the need for the Programme to focus itself on specific areas, as identified in a number of evaluations, notably the one dealing with aid coordination capacity. The requirement that UNDP headquarters have the appropriate capacity to address central policy concerns was also touched upon. Some substantive and managerial issues were raised regarding the follow-up to specific evaluations. They were referred to the operational units concerned for response.

70. The attention that needed to be paid to self-sustaining national capacity was a recurring theme in several comments, as was the importance of making the best use of the capacities of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. In that connection, it was suggested that UNDP make a greater effort to synthesize the development experience of the various United Nations agencies and share it with all concerned.

71. Some delegations noted that while evaluation should be guided by Governing Council decision 90/34, it should not prevent CEO from addressing other key evaluations issues as appropriate. One area that CEO was urged to work on was the monitoring and evaluation of country programmes. In that connection, the move to greater use of projects was appropriate. The virtues of joint evaluations with other donors both as a means of transparency and as a means of learning lessons and exchanging experience were also noted.

72. The development of the evaluation database was noted with approval, with interest being expressed in having access to its results. The question of how extensively it was being used in-house within UNDP was raised. The need for it to become more programme-based rather than project-based was suggested. Delegations expressed their support for UNDP efforts to develop national monitoring and evaluation capacity, and for expanded use of ex-post and impact evaluation.

73. Lastly, several delegations noted that, although they supported the reduction in the size of UNDP headquarters staff, in the case of CEO it was necessary to provide it with more staff to bring its capacity into line with its workload. With respect to the three evaluations discussed in document DP/1991/17, one representative inquired about UNDP plans to strengthen Headquarters capacity in response to the structural dimensions of adjustment

(SDA) report and about the feedback from beneficiary countries on the three major evaluations on the SDA, NaTCAPs and the responsibilities of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs).

Response of the Administration

74. The Assistant Administrator thanked those delegations who had indicated support for the strengthening of evaluation in UNDP. The responses to the queries raised noted the full support of CEO for multi-year planning. This was, in fact, the normal method of work of CEO and indeed the Special Programme Resources (SPR) documentation currently before the Governing Council provided a five-year framework of what CEO was planning to do with the bulk of the resources available for evaluation. Similarly, the SPR resources, as reflected in the SPR programming documents, went beyond the areas of focus indicated in Council decision 90/34.

75. Appreciation was also expressed at the importance given by several delegations to making feedback as effective as possible, and for the endorsement which several delegations had given to participatory evaluation. The database was steadily growing in size and CEO was beginning to be able to provide senior management with a synthesis of the experience of UNDP projects in certain sectoral and programmatic areas. As far as guidance to the field on national capacity-building was concerned, UNDP was participating, along with partners in the evaluation group of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC), in a standard approach to the evaluation of institution-building projects. It was hoped that preliminary results from that joint exercise would be available in 1992.

76. A query had been raised as to the availability of IPF funds for evaluation. The Standing Committee was assured that funds were available as a mandatory part of the budget for individual projects for mid-term and terminal evaluations. Furthermore, the SPR allocation for evaluation presently before the Governing Council contained provision for up to 50 ex-post evaluations to be initiated and managed by CEO during the fifth programming cycle.

77. With respect to the queries on document DP/1991/17, discussions were under way with respect to strengthening agency involvement in the SDA project, as well as of field office and headquarters capacity with respect to the management of SDA activities. It was also felt that the SDA evaluation had helped the issue of poverty alleviation to receive higher priority as a development issue.

78. The recommendation of the Standing Committee for Programme Matters is contained in paragraph 127 of the present report.

IV. UNDP PROGRAMME PLANNING: COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

79. For the consideration of item 5 of its agenda, the Standing Committee had before it the following documents:

Country programmes

Bangladesh	DP/CP/BGD/5; DP/CP/BGD/NOTE/5
Cape Verde	DP/CP/CVI/4
China	DP/CP/CPR/3; DP/CP/CPR/NOTE/3
Cuba	DP/CP/CUB/5; DP/CP/CUB/NOTE/5
Indonesia	DP/CP/INS/4; DP/CP/INS/NOTE/4
Tunisia	DP/CP/TUN/5; DP/CP/TUN/NOTE/5

Extensions

Argentina	DP/CP/ARG/4/EXTENSION II
Mongolia	DP/CP/MON/4/EXTENSION I
Nepal	DP/CP/NEP/4/EXTENSION I
Philippines	DP/CP/PHI/4/EXTENSION I
Uruguay	DP/CP/URU/4/EXTENSION I
Venezuela	DP/CP/VEN/4/EXTENSION II

Global project

Global Research Programme to Develop Sustainable Rice Production Systems that Minimize the Need for Pesticides, Herbicides and Synthetic Nitrogen Fertilizers - International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) - GLO/91/001 (DP/PROJECTS/REC/41)

Summary of the discussion in the Committee

80. The Director of each Regional Bureau concerned gave a comprehensive introduction. The statements and questions of delegations on each country programme were discussed. Summaries of the main points are given below.

A. Africa

Cape Verde

81. It was stressed that the proposed priorities responded to the country's needs. Those priorities were (a) management of economic reorientation; (b) development of human resources; and (c) promotion of regional development and of popular participation. The focus on modernization of the economy and on training was commended. Some concern was expressed that, at the operational level, the country programme remained scattered in terms of themes and projects. The NaTCAP exercise was supported, although it was noted that it had been progressing with some delay and thus had not been used as a basis for the preparation of the country programme.

82. It was affirmed that the three objectives corresponded to the National Plan, and that a reduction in the number of projects could be achieved. It was explained that the NaTCAP exercise had been deferred by the election process and that its first results were expected in 1992. Nevertheless, it was still considered that the NaTCAP could contribute to the subsequent development of the programme and to donor coordination.

B. Arab States and Europe

Tunisia

83. The quality of the fifth country programme document was commended, although the limited information given on the results of the fourth country programme was regretted. Particularly noted was the presentation of information on each area of concentration in terms of: (a) constraints with regards to know-how; (b) technical cooperation needs; (c) the expected role of UNDP; and (d) expected results. The preparation of a series of comprehensive preparatory studies by a series of national consultants was also commended.

84. It was noted that with an IPF of $8 million, or $1.6 million per year, and four areas of concentration, with average allocations of between $250,000 to $500,000, further concentration would be desirable. That was considered particularly important since annual office costs exceeded annual project costs for certain areas of concentration.

85. In view of the modest IPF funds, the catalytic role of UNDP was stressed as well as the need for close coordination and even integration with projects from other donors.

86. Possibilities of close coordination were noted with German bilateral cooperation in the areas of agriculture and environmental protection, while it was urged that increased priority be given to sectoral coordination. Complementarity in the civil service reform programme was also urged.

87. Information was requested on the proportions of projects under national execution in the fourth and fifth cycles and on the steps being taken to strengthen Government capacity in that regard.

C. Asia and the Pacific

88. The country programmes for Bangladesh, China and Indonesia, whose combined IPF resources amounted to about $420 million, or one third of the IPFs for the entire Asia and Pacific region, were introduced by their respective Resident Representative.

Bangladesh

89. The fifth country programme for Bangladesh represents an indicative planning figure (IPF) and other resources of $167.32 million. The country programme document was commended for its high quality; it was responsive to the UNDP emphasis on human development and to the current realities of Bangladesh. It contained a fine exposition of the challenges facing Bangaladesh.

90. Support was confirmed for the well-focused strategy and the three major objectives: (a) poverty alleviation and participation in development; (b) environmental and natural resources management; and (c) economic management and administrative restructuring.

91. UNDP should spell out the criteria to be used when identifying poverty alleviation projects. A systematic approach to using NGO to reach vulnerable groups should also be considered. The emphasis on working out a plan of assistance for employment, which used resources of the rest of the United Nations system, including food aid, was commendable. Emphasis on fostering a small-scale rural textile industry using the expertise of NGOs was also encouraged.

92. UNDP initiative in promoting policy dialogue was welcomed, especially the Agriculture Sector Review, the Flood Action Plan and the Study and Evaluation of Technical Assistance in Bangladesh. Aid coordination was a major undertaking and has, for the most part, worked well in Bangladesh. The UNDP contribution to aid coordination was appreciated - the extensive programming missions that preceded the country programme were examples. The role of UNDP should be continued at the sectoral level and made more pro-active in areas such as poverty and the environment, especially through the National Environmental Action Plan. The environmental impact of the Flood Action Plan should also be given special attention.

93. Greater emphasis should have been given to the link which UNDP was able to provide between development programmes and emergency preparedness. That was especially important since Bangladesh was inherently prone to natural disasters, as demonstrated by the devastating cyclone of April 1991.

94. Given its political neutrality, UNDP was the ideal organization to undertake activities in the area of economic management and administrative restructuring. It was hoped that the country programme would contribute greatly to improving the institutional framework for efforts to enhance economic and administrative efficiency in Bangladesh.

95. The lessons learned from the implementation of the fourth country programme should have been covered in greater detail in the country programme document.

96. In answer to questions raised on UNDP experience with national execution, the Resident Representative responded that during the fourth country programme there had been virtually no projects under national execution. However, that would be the normal mode of execution for the fifth country programme; indeed, there were twelve operational and pipeline projects currently under national execution. It was expected that at the end of the fifth country programme, national execution would account for 60 per cent of the programme. A request was made for project lists formulated for the fifth country programme and the Resident Representative undertook to provide that information.

Indonesia

97. The informal consultation arranged by the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) with three Resident Representatives (those for Bangladesh, China and Indonesia) on 6 June 1991 was very useful and should be made a regular feature of the Standing Committee.

98. Since the fourth country programme did not define specifically the comparative advantage of UNDP, there was need for a more operational definition of that comparative advantage for each theme and area of activity. In that regard, the multisectoral and apolitical functions of UNDP were pointed out.

99. The fourth country programme document did not contain adequate focus: only one of the objectives (poverty alleviation) fell within the priority mandate of UNDP. There was, therefore, need to ask the Resident Representative to discuss the programme further with the Government to achieve a more manageable concentration of attention. That view, however, was countered by some delegations who felt that the fourth country programme did have adequate focus and corresponded to priorities of the Government and those of UNDP. In any case, the Governing Council or its Standing Committee would review the technical soundness of country programme documents and make suggestions for improvement and follow-up actions.

100. The areas of focus specified in Governing Council decision 90/34 of 23 June 1990 should be construed only as advocacy points for UNDP and should not undermine the main role of UNDP: that of a central funding agency to respond in a universal and neutral manner to the technical cooperation needs of recipient countries in accordance with their national plans and programmes.

101. One delegation felt that the changes made in the third country programme as a result of the mid-term review should have been submitted to the Governing Council for its approval. In response, it was stated that the mid-term review report had, in fact, been submitted to the Governing Council at its thirty-sixth session (1989); moreover, those changes were not of such a radical nature that Council approval was needed.

102. RBAP assured delegations that their comments would be conveyed to the Resident Representative for follow-up action.

China

103. The third country programme for China comprised IPF and cost-sharing resources of $212.5 million. Concern was expressed at the apparent dispersion of the programme into twenty subprogrammes under five areas of concentration, and of the ability of the UNDP office to manage the programme effectively. Some members considered that the five areas required more specific definition and that greater focus on fewer areas would provide better returns. Several delegations praised the close linkage of the programme to the National Development Plan of China and the inclusion of environmental concerns as a major theme. They felt that the programme had been well formulated.

104. The fact that the programme was unique in the high degree of national execution envisaged and in being among the largest investments of UNDP funds was noted. That would, however, call for special care to achieve a broad multiplier effect. The need for measurable indicators was stressed in order to monitor the progress and impact of each programme, as was the need for a breakdown of financial allocations for each area of concentration. A question was raised about the proportion of equipment being provided in the third country programme.

105. In reply, the Resident Representative stressed that the country programme corresponded closely to Government priorities as enunciated in the eighth Five-Year Plan and that considerable care had been devoted to developing programmes where the comparative advantages of UNDP could be brought to bear. The matrix showing the programmes and projects illustrated that and the extent to which programmes took into consideration some of the areas of focus specified in decision 90/34, for example, management, the environment, poverty alleviation, women and technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC). It was also considered that given the size of the IPF and other resources available, a breakdown into the programmes identified (averaging $10 million each) should still provide a critical mass of technical cooperation to make a significant impact.

D. Latin America and the Caribbean

Cuba

106. Due note was taken of the three programme priorities: (a) the use of intensive technologies in food production; (b) the use of modern technologies for export goods (minerals, prawns, manufactured goods); (c) the support of scientific and technical programmes in biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, electronics and sugar cane by-products. They would build on the successful results achieved to date under the fourth country programme.

107. Several delegations commended the country programme document for its synthesis of the country's economic and social situation, on the structure of the programme, and on the concentration of the programme in the proposed priority areas. Particular mention was also given to the major emphasis placed on technology development and transfer in all three programme priorities.

108. One delegation suggested that the interesting data available in the Human Development Reports be used in the ongoing dialogue between UNDP and Governments.

Response of the Administration to the discussion of country and intercountry programmes and projects

109. Representatives of the relevant regional bureaux and of BPPE provided clarifications in response to specific questions of delegates.

110. UNDP noted that concerns had been voiced regarding the need to:

(a) Specify programme results, for past and future programmes;

(b) Ensure greater concentration, focus and manageability of the programme;

(c) Ensure linkages to national programmes;

(d) Provide greater analytic content to identify constraints and the response of UNDP vis-à-vis its comparative advantages;

(e) Design and incorporate indicators for measuring or observing progress and likely impact;

(f) Strengthen the coordinating role of UNDP;

(g) Strengthen linkages with other bilateral and multilateral programmes.

111. In addition, particular appreciation was expressed for the attention given by delegations to the review of programme documents, and to their concern to provide pertinent comments, which can only contribute to improving both the focus and the quality of future country programmes. Delegations were assured that their contributions would be communicated by the regional bureaux to the relevant resident representatives, for consideration in their continuing dialogue with their respective Governments.

112. In conclusion, clarification was given on the understanding by BPPE of the programme approach. It was the Government which defined a national programme approach - in terms of general policy goals, objectives and resource commitments - whilst UNDP responded to that approach through a variety of programme-oriented delivery mechanisms. These could be described either in terms of broad programme goals or as projects; their relationship to the national programme should be clearly explained in the country programme.

113. Mention was made of the role of concentration in relation to the programme approach and the priority given by UNDP to improving the focus and concentration of programme proposals.

114. It was mentioned that project lists were available on request, but that they should not be treated as official documents. It was noted that such lists used to be included in country programme documents but had recently been discontinued in the interests of encouraging greater attention to programme matters, as well as keeping down the length of documents.

115. With respect to the question of the comparative advantage of UNDP, a point raised by many delegations, attention was drawn to a number of studies whose conclusions were that the comparative advantage of UNDP lay in assisting recipient countries in coordinating external assistance to certain priority areas. It was also noted in those studies that UNDP was not doing enough to perform that function. It was also mentioned that the most effective way of implementing the Governing Council decision 90/34 was to offer UNDP help in mobilizing and coordinating external contributions to programmes which supported any of the six areas of focus specified in that decision.

E. Intercountry programmes and projects

116. The Standing Committee had before it a proposal for assistance to the global project entitled Global Research Programme to Develop Sustainable Rice Production Systems that Minimize the Need for Pesticides, Herbicides and Synthetic Nitrogen Fertilizers - International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) - GLO/91/001, contained in document DP/PROJECTS/REC/41.

117. The Director, Division for Global and Interregional Programmes (DGIP), gave an introductory statement. One representative noted that his Government had no objections to the project. He also suggested that it might be appropriate to present to the Standing Committee an overview of all UNDP projects involving the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) so that the contribution and role of the global programme could be reviewed in their entirety. It was suggested that that might be accomplished during the preparation and presentation of the fifth cycle global and interregional programmes.

118. Another representative indicated that his Government had no questions regarding the technical, scientific, or environmental aspects of the project. However, an explanation was sought regarding the need for the $300,000 direct cost item in the budget. In addition, his Government would like to have a document prepared which would describe the role and strategy of UNDP in regard to CGIAR.

119. One delegation indicated that biocontrol of weeds was a difficult research task but a very important topic for the direct seeding of rice. Thus, the project should emphasize that research area.

120. One representative noted that her Government was supportive of the global project and requested additional information on how it would be possible for any new technology to be transferred to interested countries.

121. In responding, the Director, DGIP, described the current role of UNDP in regard to CGIAR and indicated how UNDP support was recommended for CGIAR projects. He also explained that the $300,000 direct cost item in the budget was needed to monitor the progress of the programme and assist interested Governments in the immediate export of any new technology arising from the research. He also expressed his thanks for the insightful comments on some of the technical aspects of the project; he would forward them to the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI). Finally, the collaboration between IRRI and the developing countries in the research and its dissemination was noted.

122. The recommendations of the Standing Committee for Programme Matters are contained in paragraph 127 of the present report.

V. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

123. The Standing Committee welcomed the agreement by the Governing Council to refer to the Committee elements of agenda item 5 (b) relating to SPR programming, which would be taken up by the Committee at its resumed in-sessional meeting in September 1991.

VI. FUTURE PROGRAMME OF WORK, INCLUDING FIELD VISITS

124. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Programme Planning and Evaluation briefed the Standing Committee on developments relating to field visits planned for members of the Committee, the first of which was scheduled to take place in January 1992. The draft terms of reference on the objectives, organization, composition, periodicity and timing of field visits requested by the Committee during its meeting in May 1991, was prepared and circulated informally during that meeting.

125. With regard to the future programme of work of the Standing Committee, as contained in section IV of document DP/1991/66, the following items should be taken up by the Committee at its second inter-sessional meeting: guidelines for country programming; national execution and capacity-building strategy; programme approach and the presentation of the Nordic United Nations Project.

VII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS TO THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

126. At its ____ meeting, on __ June 1991, the Standing Committee for Programme Matters adopted its draft report.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS

127. Following its consideration of the items before it, the Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council adopt the following draft decisions:

DRAFT DECISION I

United Nations Population Fund

The Governing Council

1. Approves the United Nations Population Fund intercountry programme for 1992-1995, as contained in documents DP/1991/29 and Add.1;

2. Approves the following country programmes:

Africa

Burkina Faso	DP/FPA/CP/79
Cape Verde	DP/FPA/CP/81
Congo	DP/FPA/CP/85
Mauritania	DP/FPA/CP/80
Niger	DP/FPA/CP/75

Arab States and Europe

Albania	DP/FPA/CP/74
Morocco	DP/FPA/CP/87
Tunisia	DP/FPA/CP/76 and Corr.1

Asia and the Pacific

Bangladesh	DP/FPA/CP/82
India	DP/FPA/CP/86
Malaysia	DP/FPA/CP/88

Latin America and the Caribbean

Bolivia	DP/FPA/CP/84
Dominican Republic	DP/FPA/CP/77
English-speaking Caribbean subregion	DP/FPA/CP/78
Honduras	DP/FPA/CP/83

DRAFT DECISION II

Country, intercountry and global programmes

The Governing Council

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator on the implementation of selected country programmes (DP/1991/21);

II. EVALUATION

2. Takes note of the report of the Administrator on evaluation (DP/1991/22);

III. GLOBAL PROJECTS

3. Approves the Global Research Programme to Develop Sustainable Rice Production Systems that Minimize the Need for Pesticides, Herbicides and Synthetic Nitrogen Fertilizers - International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) (GLO/81/001), as contained in document DP/PROJECTS/REC/41;

IV. COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

4. Approves the following country programmes:

Bangladesh	DP/CP/BGD/5
Cape Verde	DP/CP/CVI/4
China	DP/CP/CPR/3
Cuba	DP/CP/CUB/5
Indonesia	DP/CP/INS/4
Tunisia	DP/CP/TUN/5

5. Takes note of the extension by one year of the following country programmes:

Mongolia	DP/CP/MON/4/EXTENSION I
Nepal	DP/CP/NEP/4/EXTENSION I
Philippines	DP/CP/PHI/4/EXTENSION I
Uruguay	DP/CP/URU/4/EXTENSION I

6. Approves the extension by one year of the following country programmes:

Argentina	DP/CP/ARG/4/EXTENSION II
Venezuela	DP/CP/VEN/4/EXTENSION II

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STANDING COMMITTEE FOR
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Thirty-eighth session
3-21 June 1991, New York
Item 4 (b) of the agenda of
the Standing Committee

DRAFT DECISION III

Evaluation

The Governing Council,

Taking note of the report of the Administrator on evaluation (DP/1991/22),

Stressing that enhancing the evaluation capacity of recipient countries is important in that it helps to improve programme and project performance,

Cognizant of the need to assess the effectiveness and impact of United Nations Development Programme assistance to the developing countries in the achievement of their goals of self-reliance and sustainable development,

1. Commends the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen national monitoring and evaluation capacities;

2. Stresses the importance of the programme-level evaluations for measuring the impact of United Nations Development Programme assistance, including, inter alia, its effectiveness in achieving the overall goals of national capacity-building;

3. Re-emphasizes the need to ensure feedback of lessons learned through evaluations into the programming and preparation of United Nations Development Programme activities.

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DRAFT DECISION IV

Implementation of evaluation recommendations

The Governing Council,

Taking note of the evaluations of the Social Dimensions of Adjustment programme, the national technical cooperation assessments and programmes, and coordination of development assistance to the least developed countries, performed by the Central Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (DP/1990/17 and DP/1991/22),

Reaffirming that the development of developing countries and their attainment of self-reliance are the principal concerns of the United Nations Development Programme and that it should devote increased attention to national capacity-building for self-reliance,

Recognizing that the United Nations Development Programme's technical cooperation to developing countries should significantly contribute to building national capacity in those countries,

Reaffirming the principles embodied in the Consensus of 1970 (General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) of 11 December 1970) and in Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977,

1. Urges the Administrator to implement the recommendations of the above-mentioned evaluation reports, with particular attention to the need to:

(a) Address capacity-building at the national policy and programme planning and coordination level in an integrated fashion as an important objective of the United Nations Development Programme;

(b) Establish the building of self-sustaining institutional capacities for the management of development as the guiding mandate for its programmes in the least developed countries, in consonance with its overall responsibility for encouraging self-reliant development;

(c) Develop a conceptual framework for assisting least developed countries as well as other countries that might have insufficient capacity in this regard to formulate and implement appropriate institutional development strategies;

(d) Involve the agencies of the United Nations system as full partners in accordance with their respective mandates and taking into account their capacities and comparative advantage, in the formulation and implementation of institutional development strategies;

2. Requests the Administrator to implement the following recommendations of the 4th meeting of the Steering Committee of the Social Dimensions of Adjustment project as presented on 10 April 1991 in Paris:

(a) Social Dimensions of Adjustment should further focus on the development and execution of such projects on a country basis;

(b) Social Dimensions of Adjustment country projects should concentrate more on policy analysis and policy advice;

(c) Social Dimensions of Adjustment needs a clearer priority focus;

(d) The Social Dimensions of Adjustment reports should be more problem oriented;

(e) The function of the Steering Committee should be made clearer.

3. Also requests the Administrator to include a progress report on the implementation of the three evaluations in his annual report to the Governing Council.